(d) and (e) After talks between a 4-member committee appointed by the Governor and the Shri Amarnathji Yatra Sangharsh Samiti (SAYSS), an agreement was reached on 31st August, 2008, wherein it has, *inter alia*, been agreed that the State Government shall set aside for use by Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board exclusively, the land in question for the duration of the Yatra (including the period required for making arrangements), for the purpose of user, to provide various services and facilities for the Amarnath yatris and raise temporary pre-fabricated structures for this purpose. There shall be no change in the proprietary status/ownership/title of the land.

Killing of Swami Laxamananand in Kandhmal, Orissa

†*77. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Swami Laxamananand Saraswati of Kandhmal district in Orissa, had been gruesomely murdered in the night of Janmashtami;

(b) if so, information available with Government on the cause of incident;

(c) whether murderers have been caught so far;

(d) if not, advice and help being provided by Centre to the State in this regard;

(e) whether the murder has triggered a lot of tension; and

(f) if so, the measures taken or proposed to be taken by Government to pacify and end this tension?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) As per information received from Government of Orissa, on 23.08.2008 at about 7.55 P.M., about 25 to 30 armed persons forcibly entered into the Jaleshpata Ashram under Tumudibandha Police Station of Kandhamal district and killed Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and four others.

The Government of Orissa has reported that Mr. Justice S.C. Mohapatra, a retired High Court Judge, has been appointed by the State Government to enquire into the matter within six months and submit a report in respect of the following matters, namely:

(i) Analysis of the sequence of events and circumstances leading to the killing of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati on 23.08.2008 and the incidents of violence in its aftermath;

(ii) The role, conduct and responsibility of the individuals, organizations, groups and/or agencies in precipitating/ committing the above crimes;

(iii) Whether the measures taken, the quantum of force used in anticipating, preventing and handling the situations were adequate;

(iv) Any other matter connected with the incidence or incidental thereto as the Commission may consider appropriate.

(c) and (d) A case has been registered in respect of this incident at Police Station Tumudibandha of Kandhamal District under Sections 147/148/452/302/120/149 IPC read with Section 25 and 27 of the Arms Act. The case is being Investigated by the Crime Branch of the Orissa

Police. 3 persons are reported to have been arrested in connection with this case.

(e) In the wake of this incident, there has been a large scale communal violence in the State, particularly in district Kandhamal in which, *inter alia*, there have been targeted attacks against the members of Christian community and their places of worship, etc. According to available information, provided by the State Government, 39 persons have been killed and at least 126 persons injured in this violence, 1463 houses and 97 religious buildings, including churches have been burnt/damaged. Around 24000 persons are reported to have left their homes and villages in the wake of violence, and accommodated in relief camps set up by the State Government. Around 14000 persons are still reported to be living in relief camps. The State Government has informed that 789 cases have been registered in connection with the violence and 1158 persons have been arrested.

(f) The Ministry of Home Affairs has remained in continuous and close touch with the Government of Orissa ever since incidents of communal violence were reported in the State. Seven advisories/ communications were sent to the State Government between 25.08.2008 and 10.10.2008 at various levels, including the Union Home Secretary and the Union Home Minister, in which the State Government was *inter alia*, asked/directed to take stringent action against the persons indulging in communal violence, including identifying and apprehending elements inciting and stoking communal violence and hatred; ensure arrangements to provide security to members of the minority community and their places of worships, etc.; undertake comprehensive measures for relief and rehabilitation of the victims and other affected persons, including measures for reconstruction/ repair of the residential and other structures that were burnt/ damaged during the violence; and, take effective steps to create an environment in which people who had to leave their homes could return at the earliest.

The State Police and Central Forces have been deployed in affected and vulnerable areas to prevent further violence and create on environment of peace and security. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also provided 53 Companies of Central Para-Military Forces to the State Government, in additional to 24 Companies already deployed in the State in connection with the naxalite problem. One helicopter was also provided to the State Government to enable the movement of officials and force personnel.

The Union Home Minister visited the State of Orissa on 03.09.2008 and reviewed the law and order situation there. He also visited a relief camp in G. Udayagiri. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri Shriprakash Jaiswal earlier visited the State of Orissa on 27.08.2008.

Concern of Amnesty International over Human Rights Scenario

*78. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that once again Amnesty International has expressed its concern on suppression of human rights in India, citing instances in Nandigram, missing persons in J & K, rehabilitation of adivasis in Dantewada in Chhattisgarh and nonabolition of capital punishment;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken Government is contemplating to address these issues?